THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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STATE LEGISLATURE, MADRAS

Thursday, the 27th December 1956.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at three of the clock, Mr. Chairman (THE HON. DR. P. V. CHERIAN) in the Chair.

I.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

Sri Jalakandeeswarar temple at Vellore

* 127-A (SHORT NOTICE) *Q.*—SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : Will the Hon. the Minister for Religious Endowments and Transport be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the public of Vellore have come forward with necessary funds to arrange for conduct of regular worship in Sri Jalakandeeswarar temple at Vellore;

(*b*) whether the notification under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act declaring the temple as protected monument precludes worship being conducted in the temple;

(*c*) whether the State Government have addressed the Archæological department in the matter; and

(*d*) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken for conducting worship at the temple?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : (*a*) It has been reported to the Government that the public will raise necessary funds to revive poojas and worship, if the temple is declared open for this purpose.

(*b*) No. It depends upon the nature of the monument which existed at the time when it was notified under section 3 (1) of the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904. Sri Jalakandeeswarar temple, Vellore Fort, was *not* a place of public worship for the past one and a half centuries. When it was notified under this Act, it was *not* a place of religious worship. So, poojas and worship cannot be revived by a mere cancellation of the notification under section 3 (4) of the Act.

(*c*) & (*d*) It is in correspondence with the Government of India.

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : With reference to the answer of the Hon. Minister to clause (*b*), may I know whether there are no other protected temples in which worship is conducted now and why there should be any objection to this temple alone being opened for public worship?

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THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : There is a temple at Avanashi and at Dindigul also. But there was some kind of worship in those temples before they were notified under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act. For us to revive the puja now, we will have to ask the Government of India to take out this temple from the purview of that notification. That is what we are doing now and we hope to succeed in our attempt.

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : May I know whether there is any provision at all in the notification issued originally under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act against temple worship being conducted? If there is no specific objection to the same in the notification—that is what the Hon. Minister has just now said—may I know why the Archæological department should raise any objection at all at this stage?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : First of all, there is no idol in the temple at present. The monument as it is to-day is not a temple and is not fit for offering worship therein. According to section 31 of the Act, a place of worship maintained by the Government shall not be used for any purpose inconsistent with its character. Sub-section (2) of that section, no doubt, confers powers on the Collector to make provision for the protection of such monuments or such part thereof from pollution or desecration by prohibiting the entry therein of non-Hindus. The monument in question not being a place of worship, section 13 cannot apply and under section 15, the public have access to any monument maintained by the Government of India under this Act. Therefore, even if an idol is installed and puja performed in this monument, it will not take away the right of the members of the public under section 15 to have access. Therefore, anybody belonging to any section or category, to whatever place he belongs, may enter it. We are trying to remove the difficulty. The Government are taking necessary steps in the matter. Already the Members of Parliament are taking keen interest in this matter.

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : In view of the clear statement just now made by the Hon. Minister and as the very expression 'temple' connotes and includes worship, may I ask him whatever be the circumstances under which worship was suspended in this temple, whether the public are not having the right under our Constitution to worship according to their belief and faith?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : I admit it and a committee has also been formed for the purpose of renovation. But this is a case which falls within the purview of the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act. Therefore, it is the Government of India that must take the necessary steps. The Government of Madras did remind the Government of India recently also in this connection and we expect a reply soon. The Government are also as anxious as the hon. Member is to see that puja is revived. I see the anxiety of the people. The Government are also equally anxious to see that puja is revived.

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Sri T. PURUSHOTHAM : I thank the Hon. Minister for the very keen interest he has taken in the matter and in view of the public feeling in the matter and the representations made to Shri Datar, Minister in the Ministry of Home Affairs, when he visited Vellore recently, may I appeal to our Minister to meet the Central Government Ministers at Delhi as early as possible for personal discussion and early settlement of this question?

The Hon. Sri B. PARAMESWARAN : If there is a possibility of my meeting the authorities or the Minister concerned, I shall certainly take up the matter with them. In the meanwhile, I would like to assure the House that the Government are not only honest and sincere but that they are determined to see that puja is revived.

Sri V. CHAKKARAI CHETTY : As a man somewhat ignorant of these things, may I ask the Hon. Minister whether an idol is absolutely necessary in a temple for worship? Cannot a temple get on without an idol? It can, because an idol is only a symbol. We can dispense with a symbol and go on worshipping mentally and spiritually.

The Hon. Sri B. PARAMESWARAN : The Act insists upon an idol being placed there. The definition of certain terms in the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act compels the Government to recognize such of those places as have an idol as temples.

Sri V. CHAKKARAI CHETTY : It is an arbitrary definition imposed upon worshippers. When we go to a temple, it is a sacred place and we can worship there without an image. Whatever image it might be, it does not prohibit worship without a symbol.

The Hon. Sri B. PARAMESWARAN : Nobody prevents any hon. Member from worshipping in any way. But this question particularly refers to the Jalakandeeswarar temple at Vellore which has got its peculiar difficulties in the matter of revival of worship.

Sri MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Is the Hon. Minister aware that there is a mosque nearby where prayers by Muslims are not allowed? May I ask him whether he would use his good offices to see that the Muslims have facilities for offering prayers in the mosque?

The Hon. Sri B. PARAMESWARAN : It may be that there is that conflict. That is why we want to see that they are given some facilities to use the temple. There is no quarrel so far as this particular thing is concerned, but we will have to satisfy certain provisions of the Act.

Dr. A. SREENIVASAN : Have the Government consulted specialists in agamas whether it will be within the purview of the Government to instal the idol now?

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THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : With all sacredness and with the proper permission of the authorities concerned, an idol has got to be installed. We cannot contravene the provisions of any section of the Act and nobody can go on installing any idol in any temple. Only where there is need and where there is public opinion in favour, idols will be installed in order to meet the wishes of the public and also in conformity with the provisions of the Act.

SRI T. PURUSHOTHAM : May I be permitted to point out that I have consulted experts in agamas on this question and that they have assured me that there is no objection to installation of a new idol in this temple?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : This is a mere monument and if there is no place for worship, then the suggestion of the hon. Member can be accepted. But this is a place notified under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act and also there is a place for worship. That is why a conflict arises and as I said, we shall do our best in the matter.

Multi-purpose courses in schools

3-10 p.m. * 128 Q.—SRI JOHN ASIRVATHAM : Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance and Education be pleased to state—

(*a*) the number of schools in the State in which multi-purpose courses have been introduced in the year 1956;

(*b*) the number of Anglo-Indian schools among them;

(*c*) the criteria for the selection of schools for multi-purpose courses;

(*d*) whether it is a fact that schools of five or ten years' standing have been included in the multi-purpose scheme while much older schools have been left out; and

(*e*) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM : (*a*) Twenty-five schools were selected for introduction of bifurcated courses in the year 1956-

(*b*) Nil.

(*c*) to (*e*) The following principles are observed in selecting schools :—

(1) that the provision of multi-purpose schools with two diversified courses should be made available in every district;

(2) that all types of school-managements should be represented in the selection;

(3) that the courses provided in any schools should, as far as possible, be related to local industries, trades, etc., and